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A NEW

SYSTEM OF POLITICS;

OR

Sons against Fathers.

DEDICATED TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD HOLLAND.

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W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD HOLLAND.

MY LORD,

HE, who ſpeaks truth, may laugh if he can, and as much as he pleaſes; but he will have all his mirth to himſelf, unleſs he finds ſomebody, who may be willing to take part in it. A ſocial animal, who lives alone, thinks more of ſociety than they, who belong to it. This is my caſe. I would fain keep better company than my own, to help me to ſupport my grief by authority, or to ſhare in the merriment of thoſe, who are determined to be merry in ſpite of me. For one, or both, or either, or neither of theſe purpoſes, I humbly recommend my infant opinions to your Lordſhip's protection. With reſpect to yourſelf, they have received a good credulous education, having been taught from their cradle to believe that, with honeſty not ſo

common as it is called, and with ſufficient wit to live by, you are good-natured enough to paſs for a perſon of moderate underſtanding. All theſe qualities are wanting to enable and invite you to adopt my thoughts as if they belonged to you, to dreſs them in better language, and introduce them into genteel company. Any nonſenſe may be digeſted by the ſtomach of a nation, that fattens on waſte paper. Who knows, whether that which I am writing on, may not in the courſe of a year or two be as good as a bank note? They have already one quality in common, for neither of them is convertible into ſpecie. To what uſes they may be converted hereafter muſt be left to poſterity.

My reaſons for taking this liberty with your Lordſhip's name, you ſee, are plural. My right is ſingular—I am ſtill

A FREE AGENT.

20th Dec. 1807.

A NEW

SYSTEM OF POLITICS,

&c. &c.

IN former times, when ſwallows built their neſts in old men's beards, the good people of this country, were governed by maxims, which are grown out of faſhion, and depoſited on the ſame ſhelf with the fragments of the family China. In queſtions of policy, commerce, and national economy, we uſed to conſult ſuch perſons as Locke, Monteſquieu, Hume, and Adam Smith, who wrote in a plain popular way, and levelled their principles and their arguments to the underſtanding of their readers. They wrote with great ſimplicity,

and, whether they were right or wrong, or whether they convinced you or not, nothing they ſaid was too refined to be intelligible. But this manner of writing has had its day, and could no more be revived than the dreſſes of the laſt century. Between fine arguing in the Houſe of Commons, and fine writing on glazed paper, it is difficult to ſettle one's mind on any public queſtion. Every thing obvious and eaſy is ſuppoſed to be vulgar. Common ſenſe is exploded, and common honeſty, I fear, is in a ſlippery ſituation. In ſupport of theſe obſervations, I ſhall juſt mention a few inſtances of marvellous fluctuation in public opinions, and then proceed to the ſubject, which is principally in my view.

1ſt. There was once a phraſe in uſe, — I mean the balance of trade, which every body underſtood to be the difference between the amount of what we bought and what we ſold. A merchant

or a nation, ſelling more than they bought, was paid in ſpecie and of courſe grew rich, unleſs he threw away his money. A different doctrine prevails at preſent. We are told that gold and ſilver have no intrinſic value, that they are nothing but ſigns, and that paper is juſt as good a ſign or ſubſtitute as ſpecie, much more convenient, and that we cannot have too much of it. A very little real wealth will go a great way, if it be well repreſented. An ounce of gold, beat into a leaf, may cover a ſurface of an hundred miles ſquare. The India Company export at leaſt a million ſterling in bullion every year, and the nation is never the poorer for it; becauſe, as they ſay, they import an equal amount of Eaſt-India goods, which they ſell to the continent, and are paid in ſpecie. When they have proved the fact, it will be time enough to argue with them about the truth of their concluſion. In the mean time, their own plea looks very like an admiſſion that

they think gold and ſilver a uſeful commodity.

2d. Our anceſtors, who really, compared with their deſcendants, knew nothing of taxation, were in the habit of complaining of heavy taxes, as if they were a bitter grievance. The country gentlemen could not endure the Land-Tax, and the mercantile intereſt were ſtruck with horror at any attempt to extend the Exciſe Laws. But now it ſeems the taxes are in perpetual circulation, and the more we pay the quicker they circulate. Sooner or later the money returns into the ſame pockets, and in the interval gives life to manufactures, to the opera, and to many penſions, payable to merit. The truth of this propoſition alſo is truſted to its internal evidence, and left to make its own way into the human ſkull.

3d. In Sir Robert Walpole's time it

was maintained by many thoughtlefs perfons, and but feebly difputed by any body, that the nation could not long fupport a debt of fifty millions, and muft fink under a hundred. Experience however has fhown that public credit has nothing to fear from a *plethora* of paper, and that the national debt is in effect a creation of fo much new property, which would not have exifted if we had not borrowed the money, and fpent it in many juft and neceffary wars, and other ufeful fpeculations. As for the creditor's fecurity, he has firft the faith of Parliament, that his income in the funds fhall never be taxed; and then the finking fund, which keeps up the price of his capital. By this finking fund, it was originally intended, or profeffed, that, fome day or other, fomething fhould be funk by it. Juft the contrary. It operates powerfully, but it finks nothing. The debt increafes; the taxes increafe; and the fund itfelf increafes. So I fuppofe the title is a mifnomer. But then it is a great

comfort to know that this fund keeps pace with the debt; *grows with its growth, extends with its extent;* and that without it his Majeſty's miniſters, whom God preſerve a thouſand years for their own good! would not be able to borrow money, *ad infinitum,* (or as long as paper paſſes for money) at five per cent. For this advantage, however, and for the invaluable facility it affords of mortgaging the fee-ſimple of the iſland, we, the people, are taxed nine millions a year, which certainly is ſome addition to the nominal intereſt of the money borrowed. As for the miſchievous conſequence of paying off the national debt, with that rapidity, which the ſinking fund continues to threaten, many people think it problematical. With others it paſſes for buffoonery.

4th. We have another phraſe in univerſal faſhion, which even our fathers never heard of, invented by the Thorntons for the ſervice of the Bank of England, and

not at all for their own uſe, *viz. a circulating medium.*

Other living things, to ſay nothing of blind puppies and dead kittens, move or float, or fly in a medium; but this medium circulates itſelf, and nothing elſe; and you may have as much of it as you can perſuade your neighbour to exchange for his goods and chattels, for his plate, his houſes, or his land. This medium has the power of abſorbing all other ſubſtances, and of melting even gold and ſilver into the pockets of the ſaid bankers. In this ſenſe, and no other, it is convertible into ſpecie, or real property, i. e. in the hands of the adept, which thoſe gentlemen call realizing, and which they perfectly underſtand. Having converted your property into paper, you may keep it, if you pleaſe, till the bubble burſt, or you may cheat ſomebody elſe with it.

5th. An ingenious ſet of politicians have

invented and propagated, with great ſucceſs, a national principle, which certainly did not prevail in the days of Queen Elizabeth, viz. that a trading nation with a great naval power cannot be better employed than in making war with all the world; that it is much more profitable to rob and murder your cuſtomers, though you can do it but once, than to buy and ſell with them. *Sic fortis Etruria crevit.* See how Tripoli and Algiers have thrived by their virtues. Look back to the authority of Caligula, and the example of Charles the Second. *Exhauſtus et egens ad rapinas convertit animum*, a natural reſource for a Roman emperor, and very fit to be imitated by his Majeſty's preſent government. On the ſame principle our Charles ſhut up the Exchequer, and would have taken the Smyrna fleet if he could, without troubling the Dutch with a declaration of war.

It is not denied, becauſe the objection

is not much valued, that the abſolute diſſolution of the whole export trade of theſe Iſlands, might at firſt be attended with ſome inconveniences; that it might lower the public revenue, which ſome people think neceſſary for the ſupport of our civil and military eſtabliſhments; that it might throw a few induſtrious perſons out of employment, and their families out of bread, and that half a million of manufacturers, reverting to their pariſhes, might occaſion a perceivable addition to the poors' rates, which being only ſix millions a year are hardly felt at preſent. For all ſuch difficulties the politicians in queſtion are prepared with a remedy, equally obvious in ſpeculation, and eaſy in practice.—Diſſolve your debt, and let your creditors go to the devil. This ſalutary meaſure would at once furniſh you with a clear unappropriated income of forty millions, including the ſinking fund, with the help of which you may maintain the war for ever. On this queſ-

tion, I am not ſufficiently diſintereſted, and am too much a party to the iſſue of it, to pronounce an impartial judgment. I have no property in the ſtocks, and I mortally hate my creditors. So I ſhall leave it to be argued by thoſe whom it concerns. Sooner or later, I ſuſpect, the debtor will have the beſt of it. A ſpunge in his hand will at once clear away the preſent account, and enable us to begin again.

6th. But, of all the novelties by which modern opinions are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of antiquity, I know of nothing ſo curious as the patriotic zeal, with which a certain ſect of flagellants, who never whip themſelves, inſiſt on an immediate declaration of war with the United States of America, for the ſole and quite ſufficient purpoſe of raiſing the price of ſugar: I mean the virtuous planters of the cane in their own iſlands, which, when it ſuits them, they call Britiſh colonies. At firſt ſight, it might

occur to any other human beings, prejudiced or unprejudiced, that this iſland of Great Britain has full as much war on its hands as it is well able to ſupport. As things are managed, even Ireland is no great help to us; but rather a weak and vulnerable part of our frontier to be garriſoned and guarded by a great portion of the diſpoſable force of *this Iſland*. Suppoſing, for a moment, that national councils ought, in ſome degree, to be governed by prudence, and that the ſafety of the ſtate is a thing to be conſidered, I think that before we go to war for the object, which the planters have or pretend to have in view, there can be no harm in aſking a few queſtions, which nobody will anſwer. For example; 1ſt. Who are they, and what are their merits? 2d. What ſort of caſe have they made out? 3d. What would be the effect of their own remedy upon themſelves and their own intereſts, if we reſorted to it? for as to its conſequences in any other ſenſe, even to the ſalvation of the Empire, I know

the parties too well to trouble them with reflections, which I am ſure would give them no concern. My own anſwer to my own firſt queſtion is, that without at all alluding to Weſt-India proprietors, who have been educated and live in Great Britain or Ireland; I have known many Weſt Indians, but I never had the good fortune to know a true Weſt Indian who was afflicted with an Engliſh heart; poſſibly becauſe I never was in Jamaica or Barbadoes, where white boys and girls whip black ones every morning under a veranda for air and exerciſe, as Engliſh children do their tops. Except when they want protection, or a monopoly of the Britiſh market, or when ſome other laudable purpoſe of their own is to be ſerved, they boaſt of nothing but Engliſh independence, by which they mean only to be independent of England. They ſay they have a legiſlature of their own, and on more occaſions than one, when they have juſtly thought themſelves aggrieved by the power

of parliament consulting the general interests of the empire at their expense, they have talked to us with great candour and in very intelligible terms, about separation, and resistance, about a union with America, and even of surrendering to France. By threats and intimations of this kind, and when they thought they had the whip-hand of us, *quatientes animo tortore flagellum*, even parliament was awed, and the abolition of the Slave-Trade protracted until it came of itself; that is, until the worthy planters found that it was no longer their interest to continue it. Such are their merits. Now what is the case? They say they are ruined for want of a market or vent for their sugars, while their expenses eat up the profit on the quantity they are able to sell; and that, if the Americans were prevented, which can only be done by war, from conveying the produce of the French and Spanish islands to Europe, the British sugars would some how or other find their way into the ports

of the continent, and that even France herself, not being able to live without ſugar and coffee, muſt buy it of *us*. Here their folly grows ſerious, and their nonſenſe makes us ſick. Conſidering firſt that we ſhould have an additional enemy to contend with, or at leaſt to occupy a conſiderable ſquadron of our fleet, it would be rather a difficult taſk to blockade all the ports of the French and Spaniſh iſlands; and, if ſuch a thing were practicable, how would it tend to force the ſale of our ſugars on the continent? Do they mean to affirm that Buonaparte has not the means and the power, as well as the determined reſolution to keep them out? A general combination of the other ſtates of Europe, to favour our trade againſt his meaſures, might help to promote a contraband traffic with England in theſe articles; but there is no ſuch combination, nor any diſpoſition to encourage any commercial intercourſe with us. As to mere ſmuggling, do they forget that ſugar is a bulky commodity, not

eafily conveyed afhore, nor likely to efcape without detection? Or do they believe it would be often attempted with the certainty of confifcation, and heavy penalties attending a difcovery? Still the Planters go on in the fame ftrain, *We have no vent for our fugars;* and this is the perpetual burthen of their fong. That they have raifed more than they can fell is not at all improbable. But why have they done fo? Againft repeated admonitions from parliament in the laft twenty years, againft the fenfe and reprobation of the mother country, againft the obvious dictates of prudence as well as humanity, they have increafed the importation of negroes from Africa; they have opened frefh ground and extended their plantations, and now they complain that the produce is not faleable. Suppofing this to be the cafe, I fee nothing in it but, what they would laugh at if they faw it, an awful inftance of providential juftice. Their punifhment grows out of their guilt.

As to the fact, it cannot be true in the extent to which they ſtate it.

In all other articles of conſumption a high price ſuppoſes one of two things; either that the demand is conſiderable, or that there is a ſcarcity of the commodity. Now we know full well that the price of ſugar in theſe iſlands is ſo high that none but the very affluent can pay for the firſt refined ſugar; that perſons in moderate circumſtances are reduced to a ſtrict economy in the uſe of the coarſer ſorts; and that the country poor cannot buy even brown ſugar for their black tea, and have therefore left it off entirely. Yet the outcries of the Weſt Indians would lead a ſtranger to conclude that ſugar was a drug in the Britiſh markets, and ſo cheap that we fattened our hogs with it. If the warehouſes are glutted with ſugar, why don't they bring it to market, and lower the price to the Britiſh conſumer?

One queſtion only, on this perplexed ſubject, remains to be conſidered. I am content to abandon every thing I have ſaid, and to take every thing they ſay for granted. Admitting the grievance exactly as they repreſent it, I am at iſſue with them on their remedy. They affirm that a declared war with America would have the effect of preventing the Americans from running the produce of the French and Spaniſh colonies into the ports of the continent. Perhaps it might in ſome degree. But would that mend the caſe of our planters on the whole of their ſituation, and taking into view all the other conſequences of the war? 1ſt, Their intercourſe with America being cut off the ſupplies of lumber and proviſion would be at an end, or obtained from either Canada or Europe at an immoderate increaſe of charge.

2d. Freight and inſurance, which they can

ſcarcely pay at preſent, would alſo riſe by the war.

3d. Having entered into the war for their particular benefit, they would hardly deſire us to lower the duties by which it is to be ſupported, and which, after all, are paid by *us* the conſumers, not by the importers.

4th. Even the Britiſh market, of which they have at preſent a complete monopoly, will receive ſupplies of ſugar from other quarters, in war, which could not be brought into it while we kept the peace with America; but every increaſe of the quantity, wherever it comes from, muſt of neceſſity lower the value, and of courſe diminiſh the price of the commodity in hand, which they ſay they cannot ſell, even now, when there are no foreign ſugars in the market, that is, when they have no competitors. Do they believe that our cruiſers and privateers will *not* take a multitude of American ſhips and

others laden with the produce of French and Spaniſh colonies? That theſe veſſels will *not* be brought into Britiſh harbours, and that the cargoes will *not* be ſold for the benefit of the captors? And, if the planters are diſtreſſed for want of a ſale now, what will become of them and their produce when the war has produced its natural and unavoidable effect of increaſing the quantity and dividing the market againſt them? Will any man give *them* ſixty ſhillings for a hundred weight of ſugar from Barbadoes or Jamaica, when he can purchaſe prize ſugars, full as good as theirs, for fifty?

On this ſtate of the caſe one would think that the planters muſt be infatuated, if not ſtone-blind, not to ſee that a war with America muſt be inſtantly deſtructive to themſelves, and that *their* intereſts would be the very firſt that would be ruined by it; unleſs they have ſome underhand reſources and remedes, which are kept out of ſight. Is it quite

certain that the ſame planters, who clamour for a rupture between Britain and the United States, or for meaſures that muſt produce it, would not be the firſt to open a contraband with the Americans? Undoubtedly it is the duty of government to liſten to the complaints of all its ſubjects, and to weigh their reaſons, if they have any, but not to be governed by their paſſions, much leſs to ſacrifice a great general intereſt for a particular advantage. The Britiſh navy has already very ſufficient occupation. A war with America would oblige us not only to maintain a ſtrong ſquadron on that coaſt, but another to watch the proceedings of our own iſlands. In return for which all the benefit the public would reap by the war would be confined to the prizes taken by our privateers and cruiſers.

FINIS.

W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey.